



# What's happening?

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## *My name is Raul*

Hi, my name is Raul Morales S. from Mexico. I am a Computer Sciences PhD student at the Yano Laboratory, here in the Tokushima University.

I thought of the most significant "turning points" in my life here in Japan before I started writing this essay.

This is the first time that I live outside my country. At the beginning, everything looked different from my home country, the roadway direction, the signs, the buses, houses, and the culture. The taste of one coca cola (Coke) was completely different than the one from my country. How could the taste of Coke change? Then, I saw many products from my country but, when I saw the prices... ups!! They were so expensive. I quickly found out that this was not the Japan I had studied and imagined before in my country.

I was living and studying Japanese language in Osaka Gaidai for almost 6 months. In that time my life started to change quickly. The University's apartments were so small, the furniture were like toys. There were just few radio stations, small refrigerators, no oven, small gas stoves, small sinks in the kitchen, if you have one. It was very hard to connect me to the Japanese life style.

After getting accustomed to it, it becomes quite comfortable and homy. More so, in fact, than what you left back home. Everything has its place, it has to. You do not spend enormous amounts on furniture. Where would you put it? It takes away one pressure that people in the American continent cannot escape.

Japan has half the population of the USA and 40 millions more than the population of Mexico, crammed into a space the size of California, yet the crime rate is the lowest of all industrialized nations.

Japanese are not thieves and for the most part are not violent. They accept responsibility for their own actions and for the most part will leave trouble instead of fighting for what is right. Theft is increasing, but still non-existent when compared to the west. Rape is also almost unheard of, but growing. Murder is so rare that a nationwide manhunt will start until the culprit is caught, and 99% of the time, they are.

It is safe to walk the streets of Osaka alone and here in Tokushima, you can feel like walking in your house at any hour of the day or night. Probably the reason number one people like Japan are "Safety."

Japan has some of the best food around. You know about sushi, but that is only one. There are many famous and tasty dishes served up. Some foods that rated the highest among foreigners polled and a must try if you are visiting or living in Japan include: Tempura, Yakiniku, Yakitori, Ton-Katsu, Shabu-Shabu, Nabe, Indian Curry, Somen, Ramen, Sukiyaki, Udon, and never forget the Japanese beer!!

This is probably reason number two for liking life in Japan the "FOOD".

The reason number 3 is the Japanese "people". Getting Along Together! They are said to be the most polite in the world, very helpful, quiet and good neighbors. The patience of the Japanese seems to have no limits. They do not start fights;

in fact they normally will leave before fighting. They are crowded and crammed everywhere, yet do not complain.

Living and studying here in Tokushima is probably the best experience I have. When I came here I was so afraid of everything, I had not any friend, and the dormitory was very far from the Josanjima campus, I was very scared. Now that I have been living here for about one year, everything is fine, my family came last year, we have a lot of Japanese and foreigners friends, my little daughter goes to the houikyuen, my wife takes Japanese classes at TOPIA and here in the University, this year she is also planning to start a master course here, of course if everything goes well.

Recently I have seen some very good positive aspects regarding the Tokushima University, for example from this year, there are more Japanese classes, many foreigners are arriving to study at the university, and probably from now, the Tokushima University is going to provide a better cultural interchange for Japanese and foreigners students, it will be open to the interchange of new ideas, new languages and new modus vivendum. I am proud of being part of the Tokushima University and in some other opportunity I will try to share new experiences.

